10th April 2013

Ezekiel

Good morning,

I would like to discuss in this article the history and the symbolism of the oracles of the prophet **Ezekiel** of the old testament.

[http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-xW9sFdwj2xo/VJCMOZyXGpI/AAAAAAAAItU/bYxwWDYqJUw/s1600/Le%2Bproph%C3%A8te%2BEzekiel%2B-%2BBenedetto%2BAntelami%2B-%2B1214%2B1218%2B-%2BFidenza%2B-%2BCath%C3%A9drale.jpeg]

"The Prophet Ezekiel" - Benedetto Antelami (1214 1218)
Cathedral of Fidenza - Province of Parma - Italy

Here is the context at the time:

Ezekiel, son of Buzi, came from a large priestly family in Jerusalem. He is with Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel, one of the four great prophets of the old testament. The story of Ezekiel takes place during the exile of the people of Israel in Babylonia around 598 BC. Jerusalem had been besieged and taken by the Babylonians. The city and the temple of Jerusalem had been destroyed in 587 and the people condemned to exile. Nebuchadnezzar the king of

Babylon had defeated the Egyptians in 605 at Carchemish and reigned over the entire region. Ezekiel passed through this tragic period of Israel's history and lived in exile for twenty-two years.
It is in a foreign land, notably on the banks of the Kebar river in Babylonia, that the young priest Ezekiel pronounces his oracles.

[http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-27bh_ifJyX4/VJCPWNq_KuI/AAAAAAAAItg/m_68AOo8klU/s1600/Ezekiel%2B-%2BMichel%2BAnge%2B-%2BChapelle%2BSixtine%2Bdu%2BVatican%2B-%2BRome.jpg]
"Ezekiel" by Michelangelo - Vatican Sistine Chapel - Rome

Here is a summary of the first great vision of the prophet Ezekiel:

Ezekiel sees in a big cloud a fire springing up in the center of which four beings endowed with four faces and four wings appear to him. Each of these beings has a man's face, a lion's face, a bull's face and an eagle's face. They also each have two pairs of wings: one folded down and the top one outstretched. These four beings have the aspect of burning coals, of torches from which flashes come out.
At the feet of these four beings Ezekiel sees four large and fearful wheels moving in the four directions.
Then, a sapphire stone appears to him in the firmament in the form of a throne with a human form on it. From

the loins of the figure seated on the throne a vermilion burst forth with a fire all around.This vision transports young Ezekiel to another dimension. For him it is obvious that this vision glorifies God. Ezekiel then falls face down and then hears a voice.

[http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-0bk3dsCb5xQ/VJVnl8rHJ_I/AAAAAAAAIuE/7kq99aqX14o/s1600/Hans%2BHolbein%2Bder%2BJ%C3%BCngere%2B-%2BLa%2Bvision%2Bd%27Ezekiel%2B-%2BBible%2Bde%2BZurich-%2B1538.jpg]

"Ezekiel's vision" - Zurich Bible - Hans Holbein der Jüngere - 1538

God then speaks to Ezekiel and asks him to go to the house of Israel which is only hardened brows and obstinate hearts.

The message is clear: the people are in exile because they have sinned and God asks Ezekiel to be his spokesperson with the "wicked", the impious so that they convert otherwise they will die.

[http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-1wX9KhsEskU/VJaoTbAdPcI/AAAAAAAAIuU/uOY4S4geOss/s1600/La%2Bvision%2Bd%27Ez%C3%A9kiel%2B-%2BLa%2Bchar%2Bde%2BDieu%2B-%2BGuiard%2Bdes%2BMoulins%2B-%2BBible%2Bhistoriele%2B-%2BD%C3%A9but%2Bdu%2BXV%C2%B0%2Bsi%C3%A8cle%2B-Biblioth%C3%A8qiue%2BNationale%2Bde%2BParis.jpg]

"The Vision of Ezekiel - The Chariot of God" - Guiard des Moulins
Historial Bible - Beginning of the 15th century - National Library of Paris

[http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-4cpgXVn7tHM/VJbBdMFEHaI/AAAAAAAAIu4/Aq4AEWytyy0/s1600/La%2Bvision%2Bd%27Ezekiel%2B-%2BRapha%C3%ABl%2B-%2B1516%2B-%2BPalais%2BPitti%2Bde%2BFlorence.jpg]

"The Vision of Ezekiel" - Raphael - 1516 - Palazzo Pitti in Florence

[http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-3hhctdt9Q54/VJa-5CPUD1I/AAAAAAAAluk/coX0Phxq5a8/s1600/La%2BVision%2Bd%27Ez%C3%A9kiel.jpg]
"The Vision of Ezekiel" - Gustave Doré - 1883

In short, God makes it understood that if he lives in the temple of Jerusalem, he is above all attached to the people of Israel and is present where this people lives.
In fact, this vision of Ezekiel which, it must be said, has an apocalyptic character, announces the restoration of the link between God and the people of Israel.
Much later, the fathers of the Christian church will interpret the vision of Ezekiel as the announcement of the coming of **Christ** and will make the four beings that are the man, the lion, the bull and the eagle the four associated emblems. to the four evangelists of the new testament.

[http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-Zd88HBZsvR4/VJbAdpnoCOI/AAAAAAAAIuw/mMjYZMGuj0M/s1600/Symboles%2Bdes%2Bquatre%2B%C3%A9vang%C3%A9listes%2B-%2BMaitre%2Bde%2BGysbrecht%2Bde%2BBrederode%2B-%2B1460.jpeg]

Symbols of the four evangelists
Master of Gysbrecht of Brederode - 1460

The **man** is associated with the Gospel according to Saint **Matthew** which begins with the genealogy of Christ.
The **lion** is associated with the Gospel according to Saint **Mark** at the beginning of which the text evokes the cry of John the Baptist who arises from the desert in order to prepare the way of the Lord.
The **bull** is associated with the Gospel according to Saint **Luke** which in the first pages evokes a sacrifice (traditionally a bull)
The **eagle** is associated with the Gospel according to Saint **John** , which begins with the divine word from heaven.
The whole constitutes for the fathers of the church the **tetramorph** (from the Greek *tetra* which means "4" and *morphe* which means "form") or the "four living beings" which in Christianity often accompany Christ in majesty.

[http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-31n-eDDi8yA/VJcMi8zyv_I/AAAAAAAAIwk/XHeSixizlkg/s1600/Christ%2Ben%2Bgloire%2Bavec%2Bles%2B4%2B%C3%A9vang%C3%A9listes.jpg]

Christ in glory with the 4 evangelists

[http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-YUhQPM7ywRM/VJcKffBLi4I/AAAAAAAAIwY/r3NDordtXdI/s1600/Christ%2Ben%2BGloire%2B-%2B1044.jpeg]

" Christ in Glory" - Illumination of 1043-1046

[http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-WLKmwpHuskc/VJb1tkEoWcI/AAAAAAAAIvg/2zvqt6qf7Wc/s1600/Tympan%2Bde%2BAbbaye%2Bb%C3%A9n%C3%A9dictine%2BNotre-Dame%2Bde%2BGanagobie%2B-%2BXII%C2%B0%2Bsi%C3%A8cle%2B-%2BAlpes-de-Haute-Provence.JPG]

Tympanum of Benedictine Abbey of Our Lady of Ganagobie - 12th century
Alpes-de-Haute-Provence

[http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-9FxOWAJdP5E/VJb7hVnYAjI/AAAAAAAAIvw/21y_SKFBnGM/s1600/Marc%2Bet%2Ble%2BLion%2B-%2B781%2B783%2B-%2BAix%2Bla%2BChapelle%2B-%2BCommanditaire%2BCharlemagne%2Bet%2Bson%2B%C3%A9pouse%2BHildegarde%2B-%2BBiblioth%C3%A8que%2BNationale%2Bde%2BFrance%2B-%2BParis.jpeg.jpeg]

"Mark and the Lion" - 781/783 - Aix la Chapelle
Sponsor Charlemagne and his wife Hildegarde
National Library of France - Paris

[http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-wYMrjNI-6Sw/VJb7ylUjSmI/AAAAAAAAIv4/z40MyDxMcls/s1600/Luc%2Bet%2Ble%2BTaureau%2B-%2B781%2B783%2B-%2BAix%2Bla%2BChapelle%2B-%2BCommanditaire%2BCharlemagne%2Bet%2Bson%2B%C3%A9pouse%2BHildegarde%2B-%2BBiblioth%C3%A8que%2BNationale%2Bde%2BFrance%2B-%2BParis.jpeg]

"Luke and the Bull" - 781/783 - Aix la Chapelle
Sponsor Charlemagne and his wife Hildegarde
National Library of France - Paris

According to **Saint Jerome of Stridon** who lived in the 4th century, Ezekiel's vision sums up the story of Christ recounted in the gospels of the new testament. Indeed, the Word of God became incarnate *(man, symbol of the **spirit**)* ; he was tempted in the desert *(the lion, symbol of the **passions**)* ; he was sacrificed *(the bull, symbol of the **body**)* and he ascended to heaven *(the eagle, symbol of the **soul**)* .

[http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-JahcLz7dFFo/VJb8zqBV-6I/AAAAAAAAIwI/qq0L_UABWNc/s1600/Tympan%2Bde%2Bl%27%C3%A9glise%2Bde%2BCivray%2B-%2BCharente.JPG]

Tympanum of the Saint Nicolas de Civray church - 12th century - Poitou-Charentes

[http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-d6kK0stU9TI/VJfpK7Uu35I/AAAAAAAAIxc/kf-1KXVrYew/s1600/Premi%C3%A8re%2Bvision%2Bd%27Ez%C3%A9chiel%2B-%2BXVI%C2%B0%2Bsi%C3%A8cle%2B-%2Bb.jpg]

First vision of Ezekiel - XVI° century

The vision of these four beings: *man, lion, bull* and *eagle* besides in the book of Ezekiel is also present in the **apocalypse of Saint John** of the new testament.

Here is the text:

"*Then I had a vision. A door is opened in heaven, and the voice that I had once heard speaking to me like a trumpet said to me: Come up here, let me show you what must happen next.*
Immediately I was seized by the Spirit. A throne is set up in heaven, and, sitting on the throne, Someone... He that sits looked like a stone of jasper and carnelian; a rainbow was around the throne like an emerald vision.

Twenty-four chairs surround the throne, on which are seated twenty-four Elders dressed in white, with golden crowns on their heads.
From the throne go forth lightnings, voices and thunders, and seven lamps of fire burn before him, the seven Spirits of God.
In front of the throne, like a clear, crystal-like sea. In the middle of the throne and around it stand four Living Ones, studded with eyes in front and behind.
*The first Living is like a **lion** ; the second Living is like a young **bull** ; the third Living has the face of a **man** ; the fourth Living is like an **eagle** in full flight. The four Living Ones each have six wings studded with eyes all around and within. They keep repeating day and night:*
"Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lord, the Almighty God, who was, who is and who is to come."
And each time the Living give glory, honor and thanksgiving to Him who sits on the throne for ever and ever, the twenty-four Elders prostrate themselves before Him who sits on the throne to adore Him who lives for ever and ever. centuries; they throw their crowns before the throne saying:
"Worthy art thou, O our Lord and our God, to receive glory, honor, and power, for it was thou who created the universe;
you wanted them to be and all things were created. »

(Revelation of Saint John, chapter 4: the throne of God and heavenly worship)

[http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-UOLLq9ReOQ4/VJchSY_7TmI/AAAAAAAAIw8/E1J6LegmMEE/s1600/Bible%2B-

%2BLes%2B24%2Btr%C3%B4nes%2Bdes%2Banciens%2Bet%2Bles%2B4%2Bcr%C3%A9atures%2Brendant%2Bdes%2Bactions%2Bde%2Bgr%C3%A2ce.jpg]

"The 24 thrones of the elders and the 4 creatures rendering thanksgiving"
Revelation of Saint John - chapter 4: "the throne of God and heavenly worship"

We notice that the vision of the prophet Ezekiel as well as that of the apocalypse of John presents a **"quaternity"** . The four beings that are *the man, the lion, the bull* and *the eagle* clearly constitute a quaternary unity: "The chariot of God".
However, according to Carl Gustav Jung, according to the ancestral symbolism associated with the number, the number "4" is on the one hand a representation of the ***totality*** and, on the other hand constitutes a stable and ordered unit of feminine character.
This totality illustrated by *"the Four"* is a symbol of the **"Self"** , that is to say of the "universal soul" which can be called **God** or "archetype of archetypes".

Here is a table with examples **of "quaternity"** where each line constitutes a unit. Attention, this table must be read and understood in the horizontal direction! It would indeed be wrong to want to give too much meaning to vertical columns by associating their content by analogy.

The man	Lion	The bull	The Eagle
The mind	Passions	The body	Blade
Matthew	Mark	Luke	Jeans
Father	Holy Spirit	Married	Son
West	North	East	South
Nephthys	Seth	isis	Osiris
Air	Water	Earth	Fire
Thought	Intuition	Sensation	Feeling
Blue	YELLOW	Green	Red
Autumn	Winter	Spring	Summer

To return to **Ezekiel** , another fantastic vision of the prophet, after the fall of Jerusalem, is related in the second part of his book. This is the vision of chapter 37 called **"vision of the valley of bones"** .

Here is a summary:

God places Ezekiel in the middle of a valley full of bones. The prophet circulates in the midst of these numerous bones which are all dried up. The Lord then asks Ezekiel to pronounce an oracle in order to bring a breath of life into these bones. The prophet complies and then witnesses a real resurrection of these bones which cover nerves, flesh and skin. Always at the request of the Lord, after a second oracle of Ezekiel a breath comes from the four cardinal points and gives life and erects upright the resuscitated bodies.

[http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-ZTuG7U7K-IA/VJcNj-GiozI/AAAAAAAAIws/SmN8XlyGtBU/s1600/La%2Bvision%2Bde%2Bla%2Bresurrection%2Bdes%2Bossements%2B-%2BFrancisco%2BCollantes%2B-%2B1630%2B-%2BMus%C3%A9e%2Bdu%2BPrado%2Bde%2BMadrid%2B-%2BPortugal.jpg]

"The vision of the resurrection of the bones" - Francisco Collantes - 1630
Prado Museum of Madrid - Portugal

[http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-2anyLvJYTcg/VJbBwLlXRkI/AAAAAAAAIvA/UYF0AUmKcTU/s1600/Le%2Bproph%C3%A8te%2BEzekiel%2B2.jpg]

The Prophet Ezekiel

Let's look at the image above:

We see the prophet Ezekiel dressed in his priestly robes in a contemplative attitude.

At the top right is represented the vision of the **glorious chariot of God** pulled by the four mysterious beings who are the man, the lion the bull and the eagle. The four wheels and God himself are also represented.

On the left of the central figure and at the height of his waist, we see the **four winds** blowing over a field filled with bones and the dead. Slightly lower, these bones and bodies resuscitate which illustrates the mystery of the general resurrection.

At the top left we see the city of **Babylon** where Ezekiel was held captive.

Finally, at the bottom right of the figure, we see **Ezekiel** prostrate face down, praying to God for the deliverance of his people.

[http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-O2lYauLMliE/VJbkkIqM1sI/AAAAAAAAIvQ/WAzYtPnzB5I/s1600/Le%2Bproph%C3%A8te%2BEzechiel%2B-%2BStatue%2B%C3%A0%2BRome%2B-%2BItalie.jpg]

The Prophet Ezekiel - City of Rome

Thanks for reading !
Good Magisterium

Posted 10th April 2013 by L'alchimiste

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